



A personal message from Rosemary Maestas-Swazo

November 2, 2015



November is Native American Heritage Month, and here in New Mexico we, too, celebrate and honor the historic and current contributions, achievements, sacrifices and cultural legacy of Native Americans and their shared histories with other cultures.

I myself was born and raised in Ohkay Owingeh of an Ohkay Owingeh mother and a Hispanic father. Being born during the winter, my native grandmother gave me my Indian name, Oyégi Póvi, which means frost flower.

My parents hoped that their children would have a chance to get an education and have a better way of life. It was an opportunity that they did not have. Thanks to them and my subsequent employment at Los Alamos National Laboratory for the first decade of my career, I was able to earn several degrees, including a MBA and juris doctorate. I specialized in Environmental and Federal Indian Law and worked as an attorney for

the past 20 years, including six years as in-house General Counsel for the Pueblo of Pojoaque.

Returning to the Laboratory this summer as Tribal Liaison is like coming home. It was here that I began my work career and it's where I hope to end it to complete the circle.

In the two short months since I've rejoined Los Alamos I have heard from community and business leaders, tribal officials, school principals, teachers and parents.

Educational leaders, for example, tell me that we have children who are going hungry and are in need of school supplies, shoes and clothing, because there are not enough jobs in the region. Tribal leaders have emphasized the importance of preserving native cultures, languages and traditions through Indian education programs.

I remember the teachings of my parents and grandparents, which taught me to never forget where I come from and to give back to my community. It's their teachings that lead me to do more to help our tribal communities.

I feel a personal and professional obligation to ensure that native children and the next generations are not only afforded the same opportunities I have had, but that they will be able to achieve even greater ones.

As northern New Mexico's largest employer, the Laboratory is committed to giving back and supporting diversity and improving the quality of life in the region through its investments in education, economic development and community giving. I hope to build upon the Laboratory's efforts by partnering, collaborating and working with the tribes.

The strength of our community lies in the strength of our people and the connections that we have with each other. With strong connections, we have the power to accomplish real change.

- Rosemary Maestas-Swazo

Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

Operated by Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the Department of Energy's NNSA

